

On the road to adventure at Arabian Horse Show

By Helen Schmidling
Correspondent

Equestrian artist, trainer, and rider Kimry Jelen embarked on a challenge that is both a leap of faith and a fulfillment of a dream. Her colorful and fanciful equine artwork is being displayed and sold at the celebrated Scottsdale Arabian Horse show, February 13-23.

“This is one of the largest, most prestigious and well-attended breed shows in America,” Jelen wrote on her blog. “My artwork will be accessible to a whole new worldwide audience of horse lovers.”

The Scottsdale event attracts more than 300,000 visitors and approximately 2,400 horses competing for more than a million dollars in prize money.

Jelen, formerly of Sisters but now living in Talent outside of Ashland, still has a cadre of supporters in this area, and her fan base is growing around the country and the world. In a brief but powerful Kickstarter campaign, they donated nearly \$27,000 to meet Jelen’s major expenses involved in this event.

“The booth, booth fee, insurance, producing and

transporting artwork, gas, car, lodging, promotion, and behind-the-scenes art preparation ... it adds up,” Jelen said.

And it all came together in less than three months.

This is not Jelen’s first display at a major horse show. In 2014, she packed her artwork and shipped it to a gallery that was part of the World Equestrian Games in France. For that event, she produced

and shipped all of her artwork, but she had help with setup and sales. This time she’s had to do it all – including renting and setting up the show booth, all its required accouterments, even a carpeted floor.

Jelen, her loyal dog Harley, and her friend and co-driver Kim Luckini, left Sisters on a sunny Sunday morning for a 1,200-mile, two-day dash to Scottsdale in a 15-foot U-Haul

truck filled with original paintings, framed and unframed giclee prints, notecards, 2020 art calendars, miscellaneous arts supplies, and grocery bags full of organic and nutritious snacks for women and dog.

Over the weekend, dozens of volunteers — friends of Kimry’s from Portland to Baker City — met at Sheryl Rudolph’s home outside Sisters to help. They folded hundreds of notecards, paired them with envelopes, and stuffed them into crystal bags. They sorted giclee prints, put sticky corners on them, adhered them to foam core boards, and slipped them into larger crystal bags.

Meanwhile, in Sisters, another crew was hard at work making more giclee prints,

cutting foam core, and shrink-wrapping even more products for display. Other volunteers picked up and transported artwork and supplies, cooked and served food, unpacked and repacked boxes, and lent moral support to Jelen’s escapade. By Sunday, the work was ready for some of the world’s finest horse-lovers, from cowboys and cowgirls to sheiks and titans of industry, and competitors in the show ring.

Jelen faced one obstacle after another with a coolness that belied any nerves she might be harboring. One volunteer speculated that Jelen has angels going before her. Consider the following:

Less than a month ago,

See JELEN on page 30



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Hard-working volunteers package Kimry Jelen’s show art.

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